

2. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE BREEDING HABITS AND GROWTH OF JUNGLE CAT (*FELIS CHAUS*) IN CAPTIVITY

The present communication dealing with the breeding habits and growth upto the age of six months of the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*) is based on the observations made at Nandanakan Biological Park, Orissa.

So far eight births were recorded in this Park as follows: January, 2; March, 1; April, 2; August, 1; and November, 2. Three kittens per litter were born on five occasions, four on two occasions and five on one occasion with an average of 3.5 kittens per litter. There were eight females and twenty males, the sex ratio of females to males being 1:2.5. The weight and size at birth of 24 kittens born during the period from 12-iv-1973 to 7-xi-1975 were as follows: weight—from 83 to 125 gm with an average of 106.21 gm; length from nose tip to tail tip—from 22 to 26 cm with an average of 23.17 cm including the tail lengths of 5.5 to 6.5 cm with an average of 6.08 cm.

The eyes of the kittens were closed at birth and 11 kittens under observation opened their eyes on 11th day (3 kittens), 12th day (3 kittens), 13th day (2 kittens), 13th and 14th day (2 kittens—one eye on each day) and 15th day (1 kitten). The inter-parturition interval varied from 75 to 272 days mostly depending on the period of survival of the young after birth. One female could give birth to four litters in one year in 1973 as all the kittens were killed by the mother or died within 2 to 16 days after birth.

Weekly growth records of three kittens born in one litter on 7-xi-1975 were maintained upto the age of six months and an abstract of the same is given in the table.

The mother after giving birth to these three

Date	Age in weeks	Weight in Kg.		
		♀	♂	♂
7-xi-1975	Birth	0.115	0.125	0.107
21-xi-1975	2	0.283	0.281	0.268
5-xii-1975	4	0.445	0.430	0.417
19-xii-1975	6	0.615	0.648	0.645
2-i-1976	8	0.775	0.878	0.840
16-i-1976	10	0.935	1.200	1.180
30-i-1976	12	1.005	1.475	1.450
13-ii-1976	14	1.085	1.685	1.635
27-ii-1976	16	1.185	1.900	1.825
12-iii-1976	18	died on	2.160	2.010
		10-iii-1976		
26-iii-1976	20	—	2.260	2.085
9-iv-1976	22	—	2.170	2.020
23-iv-1976	24	—	2.330	1.980
7-v-1976	26 (6½ months)	—	2.332	2.030

kittens weighed 4.575 kg. The kittens were brown in colour and helpless at birth. The mother used to carry the kittens in the usual manner of cats.

Little definite is known about the breeding habits of this cat (Prater 1971).

Asdell (1964) states that this cat has two litters a year in India, usually 3 to 4 young. He further states that the young are born in May and November in South India.

The eyes of new-born jungle cat kittens were closed at birth and two kittens under observation opened their eyes on the eleventh day (Acharjyo & Misra 1973). The four kittens born in one litter weighed from 103 to 126 gm with an average of 111.25 gm and measured from 22 to 24 cm with an average of 22.5 cm from nose tip to tail tip including 6 cm to 7 cm long tail at birth (Acharjyo & Misra 1974).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Sri S. Jee, I.F.S. Chief Conservator of Forests, Orissa, Cuttack and

to Shri G. M. Das, I.F.S., Chief Wildlife Warden, Orissa, Bhubaneswar for the facilities provided.

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3. WILD ASS IN THE LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH

I camped at Dhrangadhra on the 14th, 15th and 16th April for the census of wild life conducted by the Government of Gujarat, Department of Forest, as one of the observers. On 16th April, the day of the count, we enumerated 720 wild asses. On the 15th at sunrise I spotted a herd of nine wild asses near the village of Kuda which is at the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch and about 6 miles from the city of Dhrangadhra. This herd was led by a female wild ass and it was interesting to note that other animals followed her implicitly.

On close observation, I noticed that the

leader had stripes on both her shoulders of about 10 inch length. The colour of these two stripes was the same as the colour of the dorsal stripe which all wild asses have. The size as well as the general colour of this animal was the same as of the other wild asses in the herd. Even the size of the ears was the same as that of other animals. Actually, apart from these 2 stripes, the animal looked identical with the others.

I am given to understand that this animal may have been a crossbreed and not a genetic freak.

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